

Victorian Studies Association of Ontario



September 2014

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The President's Message

One of my goals as president has been to open up the VSAO's largely literature-focused programming to more scholarship from other relevant fields. I am therefore happy to announce that this year's lecture series and conference will showcase Victorianist research in the history of art and fashion history as well as literary studies.

Our evening events will begin with a field trip to the [Bata Shoe Museum](#) on October 9th. We'll enjoy a curator-led tour of the exhibition "[Fashion Victims: The Pleasures and Perils of Dress in the 19th Century](#)," followed by two short talks by Ryerson University fashion historians [Alison David](#) and [Kimberley Wahl](#). Professor David's paper will be on "Poisonous Pigments and Deadly Dyes: Victorian Fashion and Chromophobia," and Professor Wahl's on "Dressing Outside the Box: Aestheticism and Materiality in Late Victorian Artistic Culture." Please RSVP as there is limited seating for this event, and meet at 5:50pm in the entrance to the museum. Our spring evening lecture (details about time and place TBA) will be given by York University Professor and editor of *The Journal of Pre-Raphaelite Studies* (not to mention venerable member of the VSAO executive!) [David Latham](#), whose talk is entitled "'A New Tongue for Art': William Morris's Revolution in Literature."

Planning for the spring conference is well underway. Our two keynote speakers this year are [Charmaine Nelson](#) and [Susan Casteras](#). Their talks will both focus on the early Victorian period and take us out of the UK to consider British engagement with the practice of slavery and its legacy. Professor Nelson (McGill University) works on race and representation, and transatlantic slavery studies, and she will speak about representations of Jamaica from

slavery to the apprenticeship period and beyond. Professor Casteras (University of Washington), a renowned scholar of Pre-Raphaelite art, will discuss British representations of American slavery. Our CFP for the conference will be published in the coming weeks.

The 2015 VSAO/ACCUTE panel will be on the topic of “Victorian Inheritance.” I’d like to thank members-at-large Margo Beggs, Katherine Magyarody, and Noa Reich for their excellent work in putting the panel together.

I wish everyone a good start to the new term, and I look forward to seeing you at this year’s events!

Alison Syme

Evening Lectures

1. Alison David (Ryerson University)

“Poisonous Pigments and Deadly Dyes: Victorian Fashion and Chromophobia”

Kimberley Wahl (Ryerson University),

“Dressing Outside the Box: Aestheticism and Materiality in Late Victorian Artistic Culture”
in association with the exhibition,

[“Fashion Victims: The Pleasures and Perils of Dress in the 19th Century”](#)

at the Bata Shoe Museum (327 Bloor Street West)

Thursday 9 October, 6:00-8:00pm

Please note that an RSVP is requested for this event.

2. David Latham (York University)

“‘A New Tongue for Art’: William Morris’s Revolution in Literature”

Sidney Smith Hall, 100 St. George St, University of Toronto

Wednesday 11 March, 7:30pm

Call for Papers

2015 VSAO/ACCUTE Panel: Victorian Inheritance

University of Ottawa, 28-31 May 2015

In Book Five of *Middlemarch*, titled “The Dead Hand,” Mr. Casaubon’s will acts as a “promise” by which he might “keep his cold grasp on Dorothea’s life.” The power of the dead and of the past to exert control on the present is a central concern of Victorian literature and culture. Besides providing a form of narrative closure, inheritance may figure as a burden or a privilege, a “great expectation” or a surprise. The treatment of inheritance might comment on personal and familial identities, national and racial anxieties, or cultural and artistic influences. Inheritance, or the prospect of inheriting, preoccupies figures as diverse as Thackeray, whose dandies live on the prospects of their relatives’ deaths; Darwin, who establishes biological links to the past, but also considers the possibility of mutation or change through time; and Lytton Strachey, whose *Eminent Victorians* rebels against the previous generation and, in doing so, crystallizes a certain definition of “Victorian”

characteristics. Despite Strachey's disavowal of a Victorian inheritance, nineteenth-century aesthetics and interests have experienced a resurgence in our contemporary moment, while at the same time economist Thomas Picketty's influential *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* has exposed the returning power of accumulated wealth and inheritance. This panel invites papers that explore questions of inheritance in or of Victorian literature and culture.

Papers might address:

- Heirlooms, wills, entailments, and estates
- Patrimonial capitalism versus self-help
- Gender, class, and inheritance
- Dead hands
- Haunting and the gothic
- Expectations and disappointments of inheritance
- Genealogy, heredity, and racial inheritance
- Legal systems of inheritance
- Literary inheritances (personal, generic, stylistic)
- Artistic reclamation of medieval and classical heritages
- Cultural, national, and historical inheritances
- The rejection of inheritance or of the past
- Neo-Victorianism and the reclamation of a cultural inheritance

Questions and submissions should be sent to VSAOatACCUTE@gmail.com. Please submit the following as separate documents by 1 November 2014:

- a proposal of 300-500 words that has NO identifying marks for the author
- an abstract of 100 words and a bio of 50 words
- a proposal sheet, available at: <http://accute.ca/general-sessions/>

This panel is organized by the VSAO (the Victorian Studies Association of Ontario) for ACCUTE (Association of Canadian College and University Teachers of English), the culminating annual event for literary scholars in Canada. Please note that speakers must be members of either VSAO or ACCUTE at the time of the conference.

New Titles by VSAO Members

Our members have had an impressively productive year. Congratulations to all!

[Dennis Denisoff and Lorraine Janzen Kooistra, eds. *The Yellow Book* \(13 vols\). The Yellow Nineties Online. Ryerson University 2014. Web.](#)

[Bernard Lightman and Michael S. Reidy, eds. *The Age of Scientific Naturalism: Tyndall and His Contemporaries*. London: Pickering and Chatto, 2014.](#)

Bernard Lightman and Gowan Dawson, eds. *Victorian Scientific Naturalism: Community, Identity, Continuity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014.

Bernard Lightman and Bennett Zon, eds. *Evolution and Victorian Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Matthew Rowlinson, ed. Alfred, Lord Tennyson. *In Memoriam*. Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2014.

Syme, Alison. *Willow*. London: Reaktion, 2014.

In Memoriam

Anne Clendinning (1957-2014)

Former VSAO president Dennis Denisoff offers this memorial in honour of our colleague and VSAO President (2007-09), Anne Clendinning:

Anne was an amazingly kind, good-spirited, and brilliant person. I miss her deeply. As President of the VSAO, Anne was a selfless contributor to the association's vibrancy and vigour, and it was through the VSAO that she and I became friends. Her love of Victorian and Modern history, culture, and politics ran deep. Once, when Anne spent the night at my place, she expressed amazement at how much Storm (a geriatric, tatter-eared, alley cat we had rescued and brought indoors) reminded her of Winston Churchill. She spoke of Churchill as if she and the former prime minister were acquaintances; there was something very "Anne" about making such observations, about finding history in the everyday. In some ways, Churchill reminds me of Anne; both were historians and artists, and both will be remembered for their leadership, resilience, and inspiration.

[photograph by Morgan Holmes at the May 2008 VSAO spring conference]



The VSAO was proud to honour its late president with a donation to the Dr. Anne Clendinning Scholarship Fund at Nipissing University. To read more about this effort or to make an individual contribution, visit <http://anne.nipissingu.ca/>.